COMIC SHOP NEWS™

156

From

A-1 COMICS

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A Comics Specialty Outlet

A Bum Summer? Impossible, Man!

If you grew up in the Sixties, you remember when the summertime was *the* season for comics--particularly for special issues and annuals. This summer, Marvel is trying to recreate a little of the summer-is-special feeling with two one-shots that are a sort of a bonus outside the regular Marvel annual line.

The Mutant Summer Fun Special #1 is an 80-pager that takes four of the New Mutants--Boom-Boom, Wolfsbane, Sunspot, and Warlock-- into a world ruled by video and commercialism, where the mutants must save the vidiots from themselves. Ann Nocenti and Brett Blevins are the creative team for this special "bonus annual."

The next special is a bit more offbeat. ***The Impossible Man Summer Vacation Special*** is a 64-page multi-creator dose of zaniness that features a variety of Impossible Man tales focusing on the warped sense of humor that has made the Impossible Man one of the most loved--and most hated--members of the Marvel Universe. Both books are set for June release.

by WAYNE LEE

A+ Makes the Grade

Trying to find a niche in today's comic book marketplace isn't always easy--but A+ Comics is convinced that they've found just the right combination of new material and reprints to establish themselves with today's audience. A+ has raided a couple of comics companies from the past--ACG and Charlton--and has come up with a line of new books featuring work by some of the best-known creators in the field.

Adventure Into the Unknown #1 reprints some of the horror/macabre/fantasy gems originally published in this title's historic ACG run, along with new material.. Each 48-page issue will feature a Frank Frazetta cover ; the interiors of the first issue by Frazetta, Williamson, Ditko, Zeck, and more.

Hot & Cold Heroes is a superhero series featuring reprint and original superhero adventures. It's another 48-page book; this one leads off with Hellsing, a Mike Zeck creation who is a futuristic descendant of the famous Dr. Van Hellsing. Hellsing follows the family tradition & stalks the 21st Century Count Dracula. This Dracula

is no longer a creature of the night, however; he's far more comfortable in a boardroom than a crypt. John Byrne's Rog 2000, Tom Sutton's The Knight, and a Golden Age Yellowjacket story round out the line-up.

Swords of Valor is just what it sounds like--heroic adventure stories, both new and reprint. Kuno, Son of Steel, one of the stars of Doomsday+1, is featured in this issue in a story by Roge and Gene Day. Also featured is Steve Ditko's Robin Hood, Sir Lançelot by Dick Giordano, and others tales by Don Newton and John Buscema--and to make it seem like a real heroic fantasy package, there is a Frazetta cover on the first issue!

The real gem in the A+ lineup, however, is Herbie Popnecker. Remember Herbie Popnecker? If you've ever experienced the wonder of the Fat Fury, you won't forget ***Herbie.*** He's the lollipop-licking kid whose powers know virtually no limits. These cult classic tales come back to comics in a 48-page-per-issue reprint series, ***Herbie;*** Trina Robbins supplies an all-new cover for the first issue. (Ironically, it was just an issue ago that ***CSN*** suggested that the Herbie material was a prime choice for reprinting!...)

Each A+ title will feature 48 pages of black and white story and art with full-color covers. All four of A+'s releases will carry a $2.50 pricetag.

by ALEX KIRKLAND

COMIC SHOP NEWS™

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The Nazz's World Is No Utopia

Michael Nazareth has a simple desire: he wants to fully develop his life force to make himself as perfect as possible. He is convinced that control of the life force is the door to superhuman power, and his search for that control takes him to India and Tibet, where he explores the darkest secrets of yoga, tantric sex, and the warrior's madness, all in the hopes of remolding himself into a hero.

He seems to have succeeded.

Some people aren't very happy about that. Not at all.

Nazareth's odyssey to become something more than human is the focus of ***The Nazz,*** a four-issue limited series by Tom Veitch and Bryan Talbot. This series, which takes place outside the normal DC Universe, is a mature, sophisticated story that functions as both a hard-edged super-heroic fantasy *a la* the ***Watchmen*** and a more complex, provocative religious allegory.

Nazareth's problems begin once he returns to the United States. He no longer seems to fit in--and his girlfriend is one of the first to become aware of the changes he has undergone. The changes have affected him deeply--so deeply that she disowns him. Nazareth isn't fully aware of how much he has changed until he crushes the skull of a mugger in his bare hands. He has achieved his goal of super-humanity--and his superhuman nature soon attracts a core group of followers--disciples--who want to learn from him.

His powers also attract the attention of the government, who send out their own team of bio-enhanced beings, the Retaliators, to stop him before he manages to make himself a virtual god.

Tom Veitch, the writer of ***The Nazz,*** has previously explored religious themes in his work ***The Light and Darkness War*** for Epic Comics. Bryan Talbot, the artist of the series, is well known as the creator of ***The Adventures of Luther Arkwright,*** currently being published in America by Dark Horse.

The first issue of ***The Nazz*** is scheduled for September 6th release; each 48-page prestige-format issue is priced at $4.95.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

Captain Harlock Becomes Major Video

Eternity Comics has had so much positive response to its ***Captain Harlock*** comic series that the company has made arrangements to bring some of Captain Harlock's television adventures to comics fans as well. This July, Eternity will release ***The Captain Harlock Collector's Video,*** a tape that contains the first three uncut episodes ("Above the Lake," "Flying From the Unknown," and "A Woman Who Burns Like Paper").

Ben Dunn, artist of the ***Captain Harlock*** comic book series, has done the cover art for the videotape as well. Eternity stresses that the tape has been mastered from the best quality translated tapes available and is produced on HQ High Resolution videotape for the best possible sound and picture quality. ***The Captain Harlock Collectors Video,*** the first in a series, carries a $29.95 pricetag.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

Millennium Finds Its Mummy

Is Anne Rice destined to follow Clive Barker's footsteps as a horror writer whose works make a successful move into the comics medium? It seems so; first her ***Vampire Lestat*** proves to be the most successful of all Innovation's titles, and now a second publisher, Millennium Comics, has closed a deal to bring another Rice concept, ***The Mummy or Ramses the Damned,*** to comics form in an eight-issue limited series.

The Mummy tells the tale of the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses, who finds himself resurrected in Edwardian England. Rice's work is far different from the Mummy tales popularized by the Universal films of the 40's, however; it features the sort of believable character development that typifies Rice's fiction.

Paul Davis, Millennium publisher, said, "***The Mummy*** is a highly sought-after property, and though we've been in negotiations with Anne Rice for the past few months, we just recently signed the contracts. Obviously, we're extremely pleased that ***The Mummy*** will be the second title in Millennium's roster."

The Mummy will be published in full color, as was Millennium's first series, ***The Wild Wild West.*** While no artist nor release schedule has been announced yet, Millennium did confirm that they have signed writer Faye Perozich to handle the scripting of ***The Mummy;*** Perozich is also the scripter of Rice's ***The Vampire Lestat*** series for Innovation. "I'm very excited about ***The Mummy*** for a number of reasons," Perozich said. "It's colorful, atmospheric, romantic, has a very interesting lead character, and certain scenes are truly horrific. I'm also happy to be working with Millennium. Though they're a new company, they've already proven with ***The Wild Wild West*** their commitment to quality and a dedication to artistic and business integrity."

Millennium's Creative Director, Melissa Martin, said that Millennium was "still determining a visual format for the book. We've experimenting with a couple of different methods to achieve a unique but very appealing graphic presentation."

by KIM B. PEARSON

NEWSBRIEFS

SIMPSON'S LATEST STORY IS DINO-MITE

Don Simpson's most famous creation is ***Megaton Man***, the offbeat superhero who has starred in his own series from Kitchen Sink. Megaton Man isn't the only zany hero that has sprung from Simpson's imagination, however. His latest hero, Pterano-Man, makes Megaton Man seem almost normal by comparison.

Pterano-Man, Dinosaur Fighter lives a normal life as Pete Teriano; but when danger threatens, he dons his Pterano-Man costume and sets out to save his city from various reptilian menaces. According to Kitchen Sink, "He's strangely reminiscent of **Bob Burden**'s Flaming Carrot and **Moebius**' Arzach. But only strangely. Simpson also mixes in a little bit from '50's science fiction movies (mad doctor category), and his own special way of looking at things." Pterano-Man is only one of the heroes features in ***Pterano-Man #1***; this issue also features a second story, The Crypt of Crime, starring The Phantom Jungle Girl, Cowboy Gorilla, and The Brilliant Brain, the co-owners of a detective agency in the city. And everyone's hero-satire favorite, Megaton Man, returns in the third tale. ***Pterano-Man, Dinosaur Fighter #1*** is priced at $2; it is scheduled for August release.

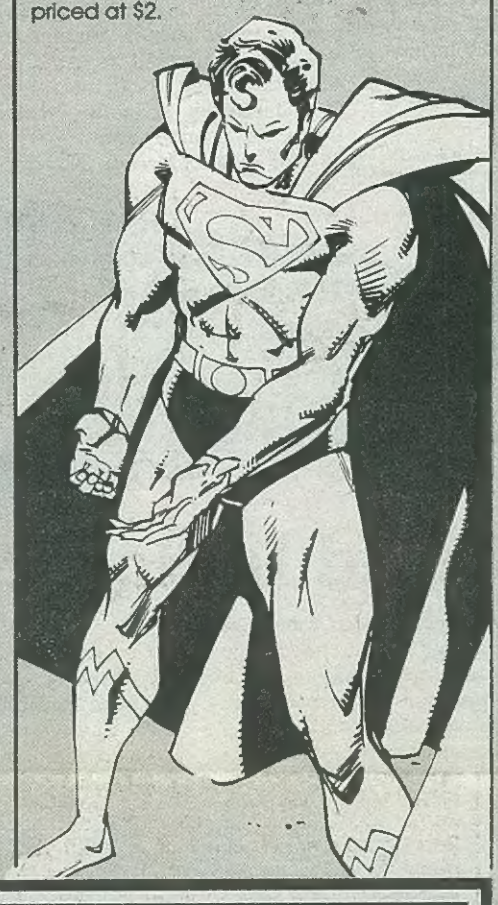
QUITE A SUMMER FOR PATRIOTIC HEROES

CSN has already told you all about the gala summer planned for Captain America's fiftieth anniversary; Captain America isn't the *only* good Captain who's getting special treatment this summer, however. Captain Britain, the patriotic hero from the other side of the Atlantic, is being promoted to his own six-issue limited series beginning in June. ***Pendragon*** is a story of espionage and danger that is tied in with Arthurian legendary; in this tale, Dal Thomas and Brian Braddock are called on by WHO (Weird Happenings Organization) to investigate a series of strange murders that are somehow tied in to an ancien British character of myth, the Scarecrow. Alex and Alysande Stuart are added to the team as they begin to delve into Arthurian legend. The action takes them, among other places, to an African game preserve to find the killer in a series of environmentally-related murders.

Pendragon will carry a $1.95 pricetag; the series is being produced by Marvel UK, with **D. Abnett & J. Tomlinson** writing the adventure and **G. Erskine** and **A. Lanning** illustrating. **Alan Davis** supplies the cover for each issue of the series; as a special bonus, his cover for the first issue is being offered as a special free bound-in poster in the second issue! ***Pendragon #1*** is scheduled for release on June 28th.

SUPERMAN GETS SIMONSON-IZED

Superman Annual #3, on sale August 9th, will feature story and art by a man not often associated with the Man of Steel: **Walt Simonson**! Simonson has created this special full-length story that has Lex Luthor inadvertently destroying the one thing he hoped to create--kryptonite! In this story, Luthor accidentally wipes out the only piece of kryptonite on earth--but in doing so, has he managed to create a menace even more deadly for Superman? This 64-page standard-format annual will be priced at $2.



BOB THE ALIEN INVADES DARK HORSE SCHEDULE

Bob the Alien, Rich Rice's offbeat, quirky, likable alien star of occasional issues of ***Dark Horse Presents***, earns his own comic special this August. The ***Bob The Alien Special*** features thirty-two pages of Bob the Alien's humorous observations about human nature and society--the sort of observations that seem all the more obvious to someone not of this world. Rich Rice has painted a new cover for this collection; ***Bob the Alien*** is priced at $1.95.

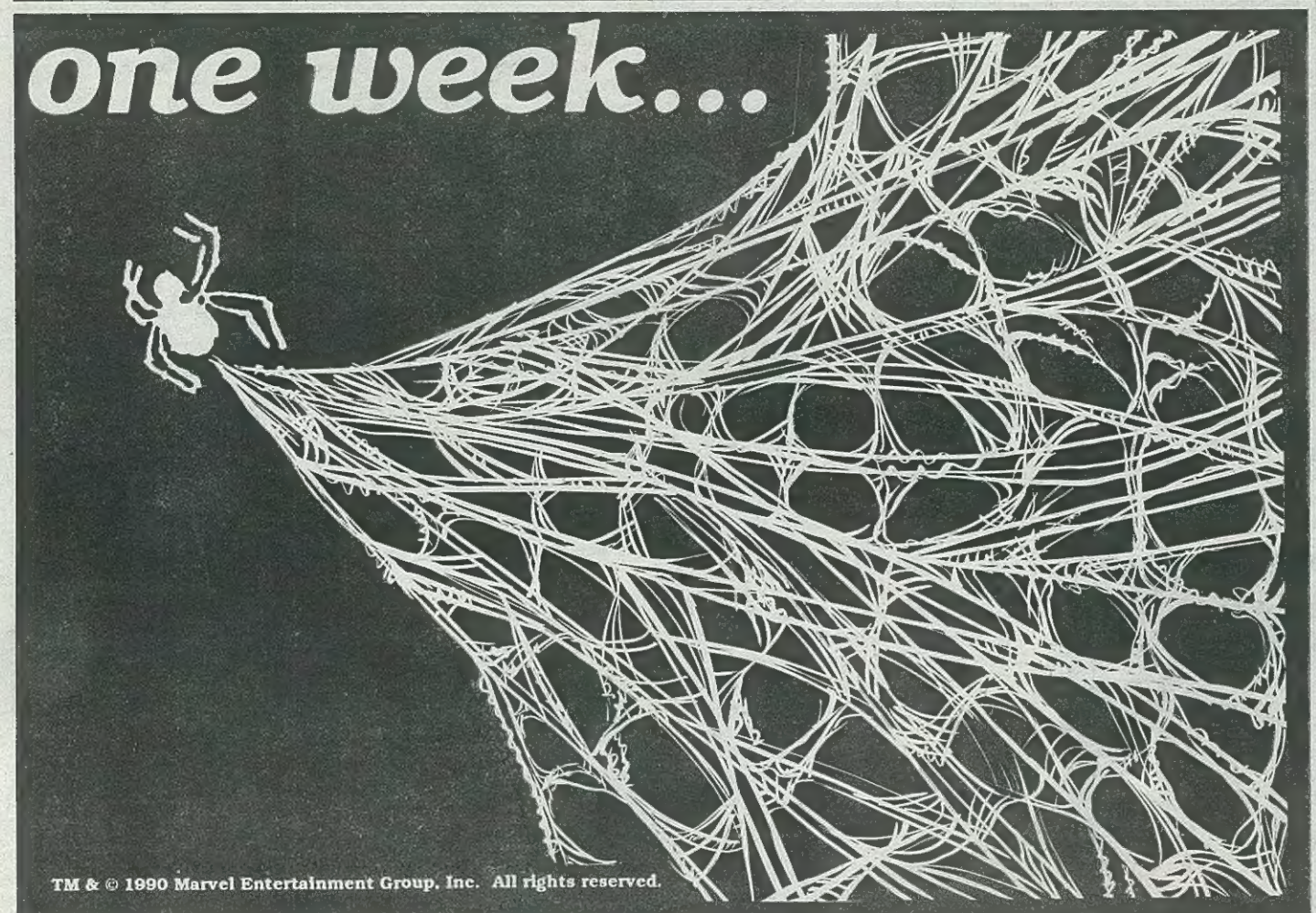
VISION COMICS SEES UDDER SUCCESS WITH ATOMICOW

"After much discussion and fact-finding with a number of retailers, we found out what the biggest gripe with independent comics is...reliability," **Rodney Dunn**, publisher of Vision Comics, said. That's why when Dunn was ready to release his ***Atomicow*** book, he made sure that he had the reliability problem solved. "Our publishing schedule is every six weeks, nine times a year, absolutely, positively, for sure. Never, ever late, nope!"

Atomicow is the story of a man who ate too much irradiated beef and became a bovine-powered superhero--but it's also the zany story of a pair of jaded comics fans who find themselves dragged into a rather surreal comic book adventure. **Mark Petlock** and **Rodney Dunn** are responsible for the offbeat humor of ***Atomicow***--and to their credit, they've managed to create a humor book that doesn't ever resort to satires of (a) TMNT, (b) Dark Knight, (c) Batman, or (d) "gritty street action" comics to amuse its audience.

Atomicow #1, scheduled for August release, will also feature a backup story of Finch Foster, Private Eyebird. This hard-boiled-detective satire features a bird-beaked detective who finds himself on the trail of a missing parrot.

Each issue of ***Atomicow*** is priced at $2.50 for 32 black-and-white pages with full-color covers.



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NEWSBRIEFS

HE GETS BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HIS FRIENDS

Moon Knight #19 is the first issue after the finale of the popular "Trial of Marc Spector" storyline, which means that it has a tough act to follow. Maybe that's why Moon Knight has called on a duo of pretty popular guys to help keep the excitement level high. Spider-Man and Punisher will both guest-star in ***Moon Knight #19-21***. **Chuck Dixon, Sal Velluto,** and **Tom Palmer** are presenting the revamped Moon Knight in this story, and they feel pretty confident that this is one way to make sure that a good many fans give Moon Knight a try. Don't worry that you'll overlook this team-up issue; that **Erik Larsen** cover featuring Punisher, Moon Knight, and Spider-Man will serve as a rather dynamic reminder...

MEN IN BLACK DRESS UP AIRCEL SCHEDULE

The Men in Black, the stars of a miniseries focusing on UFO's, abductions, cults, witchcraft, ESP, demonism, voodoo, and other paranormal activities, will be back in a second miniseries from Aircel, according to Aircel Publisher **Dave Olbrich**.

"Any time a mini-series does as well as ***The Men in Black*** did," Olbrich said, "we're always interesting in bringing it back." Prior to the second mini-series, Aircel will collect the first miniseries into an 80-page square-bound graphic album priced at $4.95; the collection is scheduled for August release. ***The Men in Black*** is created and written by **Lowell Cunningham** and illustrated by **Sandy Carruthers**. "They're secret agents, basically," Cunningham said. "If someone has seen a UFO, or been abducted by one, or experienced anything unusual, they receive a visit from ***The Men in Black***." Aircel will release the new series later this year.

THIS BRIEF BUGS NO ONE...

Did you miss out on the hot first issue of DC's ***Bugs Bunny*** limited series? Do you feel left out because you're the only fan on the block who hasn't had a chance to chuckle over the **Cavaliere-Fiala-Costanza** miniseries? Hey, don't be ashamed! You can make up for your mistake in a couple of months; DC is offering you a second chance to enjoy seeing all you favorite Warner Brothers Looney Tunes stars in action together. They're packaging their entire **Bugs Bunny** limited series in one shrink-wrapped multipack for only $3. And they say there are no second chances in life...

DR. DOOM VS. THE NOT-SO-FANTASTIC FOUR

Everyone remembers the classic initial confrontation of the Fantastic Four and Dr. Doom--but in ***What If #18***, they can see what would have happened if the Fantastic Four had battled Dr. Doom before they gained their powers. Dr. Doom once again is trying to free his mother's soul from Mephisto's grasp--and his plan threatens his old enemy Reed Richards and his trio of companions. **McDuffie** and **McDonnell** are the masterminds behind this alternative-Marvel-reality; look for it on the comic shop racks on August 23rd.

COBBS GETS A GRIP ON NEW ART ASSIGNMENT

Grips was initially popularized by artist **Tim Vigil**, whose brutal art style helped bring the hero to the attention of comics fans back in 1986. Now that Vigil has gone on to ***Faust, Zero Tolerance***, and other projects, Greater Mercury Comics has used a series of other artists on ***Grips*** and its companion title ***Grips Adventure***. Beginning with ***Grips Adventure #4***, however, Greater Mercury seems to have settled on a new regular artist for the series; **Darryl Cobbs**, a talented newcomer in the field, takes over ***Grips Adventure*** with that issue. As the cover to this issue reveals, the book has no shortage of the sort of brutal violence that made ***Grips*** a much-talked-about title when it first appeared.

DO THEY EQUAL ALF-PURPLE?

Remember the classic tale of Superman-Red and Superman-Blue? If so, then you really need to check out ***Alf #34***, on sale August 16th; this issue features the story of Alf-Red and Alf-Blue, in which not one but two Alfs arrive on earth, one settling in with the Tanners and the other making his home with a Russian family. According to Marvel, "It's funny, it's politically up-to-date, and it ties in to one of the most fondly remembered 'imaginary stories' of all time, making it ideal for kids, humor fans, and any longtime comics readers..." Surely you fall in to one of those categories, right?

GLADSTONE HEADS BACK TO EC VAULTS...

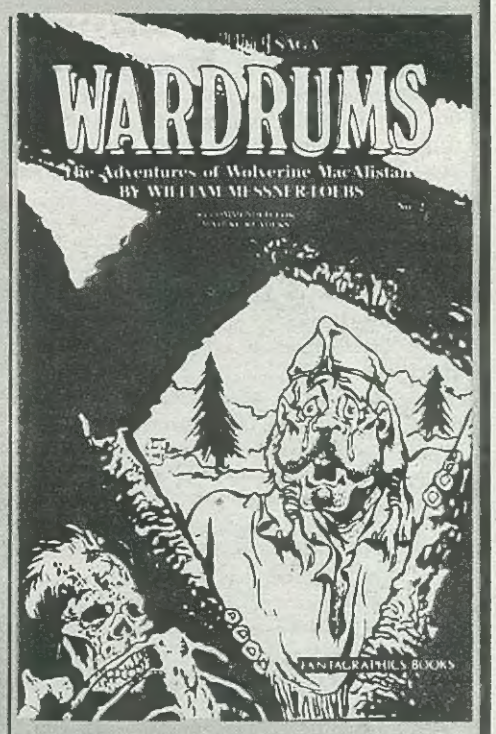
Vault of Horror #3, an August release from Gladstone, continues the pattern of reprinting two entire EC Comics in one $1.95 package. This time around, ***Haunt of Fear #22*** and ***Vault of Horror #22*** are reprinted, featuring work by **George Evans, Graham Ingels, Wally Wood,** and **Harvey Kurtzman**, among others. The same month, Gladstone will release ***Tales From the Crypt #3***, reprinting ***Tales From the Crypt #39*** and ***Crime Suspenstories #1***. **Jack Davis, Joe Orlando, Johnny Craig, Wally Wood,** and **Harvey Kurtzman** are featured in this 64-page reprint volume.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BRETT...

Oops--every now and then, even those of us at ***CSN*** make a mistake! Two weeks ago, ***CSN*** ran a story concerning upcoming developments in the ***New Mutants*** title, based on a conversation with **Rob Liefeld**. That story carried a Wayne Lee byline--Rob Liefeld distinctly remembers talking with Brett Brooks, though, and Wayne Lee doesn't have any memory of working on that story (although he's glad to take the money). Actually, it was the hard-working **Brett Brooks** who wrote the tale; the byline was scrambled with that for another story. Sorry, Brett!

THE DARKMAN BRIGHTENS MARVEL'S SUMMER

Darkman, a new film from Universal set for July release, will join ***RoboCop II, Punisher,*** and ***Captain America*** in the list of Marvel Comics' movie adaptations. Marvel will bring the ***Darkman*** to comic shops in both black-and-white magazine format and offset comics format this summer. The magazine will debut on July 12th, courtesy of **Macchio, Hall, Texeira,** and **DeZuniga**. ***Darkman*** is the story of a brilliant scientist who has suffered a terrible "accident" at the hands of the Mob, which has transformed him into a vengeance-crazed, horribly disfigured creature who uses is ability to alter his appearance to exact revenge on those who caused his accident. The film combines elements of superhero and horror films in much the same way that RoboCop combined superhero and science fiction films. ***Darkman Magazine #1*** is priced at $2.25.



FANTAGRAPHICS GETS THE BEAT WITH WARDRUMS

Wardrums, **William Messner-Loebs**' series about frontiersman Wolverine McAlistaire, hasn't been forgotten; it's just been a while since Messner-Loebs found time to do an issue. It's been three years, in fact, since the first issue of the ***Wardrums*** series appeared--but the second *and* third issues should appear this year, reintroducing readers to Wolverine McAlistaire's realistic frontier adventures. The storyline is still set in the siege of Fort Detroit, and it brings back characters from the original ***Journey*** storyline. Each issue of ***Wardrums*** is priced at $2.

NOTHING YOU'VE EVER SEEN OR READ HAS PREPARED YOU FOR

HARD BOILED

Frank Miller - Geof Darrow - Claude Legris
Hard Boiled. Beginning in July from Dark Horse.

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PREVIEWS

Give & Take
by Cliff Biggers & Brett Brooks

For those of you who just dropped in for the first time, I'm Cliff--the guy who speaks in standard type. Joining me is *Brett, the italicized guy.* Now that you understand the basics, let's talk comics...

The Wild Wild West was a concept tailor-made for comic books. A Western secret agent in the Ulysses S. Grant West, fighting brilliant scientists, treacherous plots, and diabolical villainous societies--come on, *no one* would believe it on television, right?...

Somehow, ***The Wild Wild West*** not only made it to television, but it managed to be relatively successful for several seasons; even more ironic, it never found much of any success as a comic book, eking out a mere seven-issue Gold Key run over two decades ago.

So doesn't it seem odd that now, twenty years after the series has wrapped production, Millennium Comics would not only be publishing a ***Wild Wild West*** comic, but they'd actually be publishing a very faithful, very entertaining ***Wild Wild West*** comic that lives up to the potential of the series?

If anyone deserves credit for making ***The Wild Wild West*** a success in comics form, it's co-writers Mark Ellis and Paul Davis; the two of them must be well-versed with the Wild Wild West structure, since you can almost see the go-to-freeze-frame-art-conversion-before-commercial-break inserts at the end of each segment of the story. This is ***The Wild Wild West***; James West and Artemus Gordon are the same as we've known them since the 1960's, and the plot is even more taut and convoluted than most of the episodes of the television series. ***The Wild Wild West*** manages to bring together a plot to remove Grant from office, a Lincoln-assassination conspiracy, John Wilkes Boothe, Dr. Loveless, and more in a storyline that's filled with the essence of the original series.

You don't have to be a fan of the original ***Wild Wild West*** to enjoy this limited series, though; Ellis and Davis have written a storyline that manages to acquaint readers with the concept sufficiently enough that a new audience can get caught up in the secret-agent world of West and Gordon without any confusion.

Darryl Banks and Robert Lewis are very capable artists; they tell the story visually and don't get bogged down with artographed illustrations of the series stars (a real problem for many comics based on films or television shows). I have only one minor quibble with the black-and-white art (and I know it'll be clear in the final color version): in some of the long shots, the artists need to differentiate more clearly between West and Gordon--they look alike in some sequences, and this caused some momentary confusion.

Since Ross Martin died a few years back, we'll never have a chance to see a new ***Wild Wild West*** television series or tv-movie with the original cast--but thanks to Millennium's comic book, we can enjoy a story that ranks with the best of the original tv run. I certainly hope that Millennium picks this series up for a regular run after the miniseries is completed!

BUT CLAY HASN'T CALLED ME "MAJOR" IN YEARS--AND HE HAS BURSITIS, SO HE NEVER SHAKES HANDS.
I REPEAT- WHERE'S THE COLONEL?
I--THINK I KNOW, JIM---
Wild Wild West
I AM SINKING... INTO THE BOTTOM OF A DEEP BLUE SEA...
...SINKING IN AN OCEAN FULL OF LIVES, TWINKLING...
2001 Nights
"WAND?!" IT IS NOT A STAFF LIKE GAMLI'S? AND WHAT IS "DICTIONARY?"
Book Two
WHAT THE DEVIL--?!
SOMEHOW, JOHN DOE-- TO COIN A PHRASE--
-- I DON'T THINK WE'RE IN KANSAS ANYMORE.
Excalibur 27

*Hey, I was, and still am a big fan of the **Wild Wild West,** so it would take a lot to impress me. I loved that show. I memorized that show when I was a kid. I positively drove my parents insane watching it. It would have to be really well done for me to like a comic book version of it.*

I like it. This is the way I remember the show being. This isn't some half-lame western plot that they brought out so they could fulfill a copyright and use a name. Hub-ub! This is James West and Artemis Gordon out on the wild fro n-tier fighting bizarre menaces and being far too clever to really exist. This is fun!

You're right about the art. It is much better than I expected it to be. I don't know why, but I wasn't expecting this caliber of work from a company that was so new. I was wrong. I was wrong to think it, and Banks and Lewis proved that fact. Sorry. But the important thing is that I now get to enjoy it.

I too, was saddened by the loss of Ross Martin. I watched the TV revival that was done a few years back, Paul Williams and all, and still wanted more adventures. Well, now I'm getting them. And boy, do they blow Paul Williams out of the saddle! I'm happy.

*Ever heard of the **1001 Arabian Nights**? It's the book that comprises the majority of the early fiction of the Middle-East. It revolves around this woman named Scheherazade who, so that she may save her life, tells a never-ending story that takes 1001 nights for her to finish. It's the work the has Ali-Baba and the Forty Thieves and all those other stories in it. Well, what if that went on even longer, for say, 2001 nights?*

*Viz is about to release a science-fiction anthology book entitled **2001 Nights.** This is destined to become a classic of science-fiction comic storytelling. The stories in this book are extremely well thought out and never the trite science-fiction that has so often been brought to this type of comic in the recent past.*

*I have not read a title that captured the heart and purpose of science-fiction this well since EC stopped publishing many years ago. Even the story that blatantly parallels a rather famous movie so closely didn't bother me. Hmmm, maybe it's not a coincidence that the first issue of a book with **2001** in the title matches up with...naah, couldn't be.*

It's obvious that the some sequences in the comic book are influenced by the Kubrick film--I think it sets a style that Hoshino strives to equal. There are even story parallels--the mystery at the bottom of a lunar crater, for instance. Thankfully, Hoshino takes the story down a different path.

The art on this title is sharp. Though clearly Japanese, the art doesn't follow any of the set stereotypes that have come to be associated with Japanese style. The faces and figures all fit more closely with what we consider an American style.

I'm also pleased that the technical art is done in a very "Americanized" Sid-Mead-ish style. That's not a very common style in most of the manga sf I've seen.

But it is still the stories that make this book such a joy. The comics field has long been craving a well done science-fiction anthology, and it looks like we've got one at last...at least temporarily. The first issue has four nights taken up, at that rate we've only got 499 more issues left! What are we going to do then?

At the same time, the first issue isn't just four unconnected short stories; the author is building some grander tale here, and each story has a relationship to other stories in the book. That's not so with the ***1001 Arabian Nights***. I'm eager to see more so that we can judge more fully what Hoshino has in mind on a larger scale.

Barry Windsor-Smith and Bill Sienkiewicz?

When I first heard that these two comic art aces were going to work together on ***Excalibur #27,*** I was more than a little surprised. I can't think of two artists whose styles seemed more diverse than Windsor-Smith and

& REVIEWS

Sienkiewicz.

When Marvel graciously sent along an advance review copy of ***Excalibur #27***, it became obvious that I wasn't the only one eager to see how the team would work. Everyone here at ***CSN*** wanted to sneak a peek at the artwork.

No one was disappointed!

Excalibur #27 is a fine example of what an artistic collaboration should be; the end result is something different from what either artist would have done individually--and it's very visually pleasing. This is the sort of art you'd love to own a page of, just to look at the original work and wonder at how the two artists accomplished this or that effect. ***Excalibur #27*** is a must-have issue for fans of Windsor-Smith or Sienkiewicz--but it's a double treat for those of us who admire both artists' work.

Okay, but what about the story? ***Excalibur*** hasn't been blessed with the most scintillating of storylines in the recent past; in fact, the Crosstime Caper became so bogged down before its finish that I think almost everyone was glad to see it finally come to an end. So what's Claremont doing with ***Excalibur*** now?

Quite a lot, I'm pleased to say.

This story ties in with the now-defunct ***Nth Man***--but don't assume that's a bad thing, because it isn't. This surreal glimpse into the world of Alfie O'Meagan is proof that Nth Man had a great deal of unfulfilled potential; I'm not sure if Claremont was inspired to prove that every concept can be developed into something better or what, but he really shines on this issue of ***Excalibur.*** In fact, I don't think Claremont has written anything better than this for any comic book in the past couple of years. (To digress a minute, though, I have to say that I've always thought that Claremont's issues done in conjunction with Barry Windsor-Smith have excelled; perhaps it can be racked up to the cliched "chemistry," I dunno...)

Okay, okay. I love Sienkiewicz, just about everybody knows that, and I really am fond of Windsor-Smith's stuff as well. But together? It sounds weird.

Well, it is, but it's a good kind of weird. This is indeed what a collaboration should be. WOW! Neat stuff at work. It's times like this that I really love my job.

The Nth Man cross-over when I heard about it sounded as odd as the art team, but that too works well. You're right, this is the best that Claremont has been in the past couple of years. Claremont not only does well when he is working with Windsor-Smith, but he does well whenever he works with a big name-- Art Adams, Barry Smith, Alan Davis, Mike Mignola, etc. I think that working with talents such as these gets Claremont excited about his work. And when the creative team gets excited, the fans are in for some quality work.

EE "Doc" Smith's Lensman books have been a fan favorite series for many years, and most were pleased to see the stories finally get there place in the comics field a year or so ago. But that title was only a mini-series, and eventually saw its way into the realm of over and done. Okay, say it with me... its baaaaaacck.

Eternity is once again publishing Lensman stories in another five part mini-series-- ***Lensman: Galactic Patrol.*** *The work on this title is done by writer/artist Tim Eldred, and after only one issue, I think that I'm going to enjoy his run.*

I felt that, though loyal to the work, the first ***Lensman*** *series lacked something. That isn't the case here. Eldred tells a tight action packed story that doesn't leave you time to wonder if something is lacking. The story seems to revolve around three members of the Galactic Patrol who get separated from The Britannia and her crew and are forced to fend for themselves. In fact, the ads for the series do point out that this is a "Lensman side story." So don't expect all of the grandeur of* ***Lensman,*** *but don't skip out either-- this is well done shoot-um-up sci-fi.*

Did I ever mention that I never read any of the Doc Smith Kimball Kinnison tales? It really doesn't matter here, I don't guess--but it at least gives the reader a reference to make it clear that all my Lensman knowledge comes from the Japanese version....

These adventures work well in limited series format. I think it enhances the episodic nature of Eldred's plots. This is pure space opera--but it's well-constructed space opera, particularly enjoyable in comics form.

Before we leave this book, let me address one issue that bothered me both here and in ***Robotech II: Malcontent Uprisings.*** I really don't feel that a miniseries logo should be so very similar to the logo of the original series. I think it creates unnecessary visual confusion and makes it more difficult for readers to differentiate the books on the stands...

Attu was a dream-book for Sam Glanzman fans; it gave them a chance to see Glanzman illustrate virtually every sort of fantasy-sf setting, from prehistoric man to militaristic worlds to science-fiction high-tech visions. The first book was a visual feast--but it also contained a well-crafted story about a man from the past who finds himself a part of a world of the future.

Attu is back this summer in ***Attu Book Two***, and Glanzman's even more wide-ranging in this second volume. Tim Truman remarked that ***Attu Book Two*** "really goes places that the first book, good as it was, just hinted at," and that statement sums it up very well. Glanzman takes the reader deeper into Attu's world in this second volume, developing character and filling in background that might have seemed a bit superficial the first time around. What he's creating here is a limited series in graphic novel format, not a series of stand-alone books; reading both volumes together opens up concepts that might be missed in single readings of either book.

Glanzman's Kubertish touches really show up in the cavern sequences and the high-tech spaceships; there are distant echoes of Kubert's Cave Carson and Hawkman in these pages, and it's an echo that I don't find at all intrusive. Glanzman isn't an imitator, though; he's a stylist all his own, and perhaps one of the most underrated comics creators working in the field.

Thankfully, Glanzman can write just as capably as he can illustrate; as a result, ***Attu Book Two*** is a fine read. Good art, good story--what more can you ask for?

Attu Book Three*?--which I'm sure we're going to get. The second volume of* ***Attu*** *does fit in nicely with the first, but it answers so many questions that it seemed to be even better than the first one to me. When I reached the end of*

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PREVIEWS

this reading, I was anxious. I kept looking around hoping that I misplaced a page or two. This is an enthralling read!

*Glanzman's underrated talents are sure to be recognized in the years to come. So if you want to get on the bandwagon before the crowd, check it out—**Attu** is out there.*

*Thank goodness that there's Piranha Press! First they bring us **Beautiful Stories for Ugly Children**, and then the incredible **Gregory**, and now it's time for **The Hiding Place**.*

***The Hiding Place** is the work of Charlie Boatner and Steve Parkhouse, and it tells the story of a little boy who gets to visit his dreams. Jonathan is an eight year old boy who rides on the back of a Dragon named Id to the land where the last of a species goes to live forever. At least on the surface that's what it is...*

***The Hiding Place** also tells a poignantly funny story about life in the big city and the loneliness of youth. There are wonderful moments that hit very close to home for people who have had parents who, many times, weren't very close to home.*

I agree; it's the universality of this story in a broader sense that makes it so memorable. Few authors are able to develop their story on multiple levels in this way.

*Charlie Boatner owes a great deal to Lewis Carroll for **The Hiding Place**, for one can almost see Alice running about in the background of this delightful little world (it's flat, but aren't all maps?). In fact, I think I noticed a familiar feline romping through the woods smiling. The biting sarcasm of **The Hiding Place** is almost too much fun (Kristy Bureaucat, bah!). I have always loved works that slapped the face of the world around them and yelled, "see how silly everything really is!"*

Artist Steve Parkhouse produces some terrific stuff for this volume. Parkhouse-- best known for his work on The Bojeffries Saga-- seems perfectly suited for this style of storytelling. His art captures that childhood feel without being childish.

Most certainly--he almost makes it seem deceptively easy, like anyone could turn out this sort of artwork. In fact, it isn't easy at all; should he ever wish to illustrate children's books, I'm sure he would have no trouble finding work.

*One of the things that Piranha is particularly proud of about **The Hiding Place** is its universal appeal. The story can be read and enjoyed by anyone, regardless of age. The kids will enjoy it because it has dragons and mermaids and monsters and industrial waste and magical lands filled with fun and adventure. Which is one of the reasons that big kids (commonly called "adults" for some reason) will enjoy it too.*

I was a bit worried when I heard that there was a plotline dealing with industrial wastes and

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THE JOKER BROODS OVER THE SMOKING CITY...
JOKER!
THE CONVICTS REFUSED TO ATTACK THE SCHOOLS OR THE HOSPITAL!
THEY JUST WALKED AWAY!
YOU MEAN, WE FREED THOSE MEN--TURNED THEM LOOSE ON THE CITY TO BE AN ARMY OF SOULLESS KILLERS...
AND THEY HAVE SCRUPLES ?!
UNFORTUNATELY, YES.
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
6 11 90
SO THE CONVICTS... MY ARMY... REFUSED TO ATTACK?
MANY OF THEM. THE REST WERE SCATTERED BY BATMAN'S SLEEP BOMBS.
WE HAVE TO GET OUT OF THE COUNTRY ...
HIDE? I GOT INTO THIS FILTHY BUSINESS TO PUT A PROPER GOVERNMENT IN POWER TO AVENGE MY WIFE, WHO WAS KILLED BY STREET SCUM...
6 12 90
HER? OH, WHILBY KILLED HER, TO CONVINCE YOU.
WHAT?
I'LL KILL YOU!
AT LEAST THE EVENING WON'T BE A TOTAL WASTE!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
YOU KILLED MY WIFE? YOU!!?
HA HA HA HA HA
6 13 90
BLAM
BANG
TWO LIMP FIGURES SLUMP TO THE ROOF. ONLY THE JOKER REMAINS, AN IDOL TO LUNACY AND DEATH!
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
IN THE JOKER'S HQ... A TRAP IS SET.
ANYBODY COMING YET?
NOPE, BUT WHEN THEY DO ...THEY'RE DEAD!
6 14 90
I TOLD YOU, SPUD... A DOUBLE-CROSS!
YEAH... THE JOKER PLANNED T'WHACK ANY OF US THAT LIVED!
TIME F'R FUN!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
THE JOKER'S TRAP IS DISCOVERED, BUT...
SPUD! WAIT!
6 15 90
BRATTAATTTATT BRATTATTA
FINISH IT! GREASE 'IM!
SPUD!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
DAWN, IN THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE...
THE JOKER'S ARMY IS BROKEN.
6 16 90
MY MEN WERE BRAVE... BUT THEY'D HAVE DIED FIGHTING, IF NOT FOR THE BATMAN.
FUNNY... I CALLED HIM A VIGILANTE...
...AND YET I WAS WILLING TO BE USED BY JASON WHILBY AND HIS GANG OF FASCISTS!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
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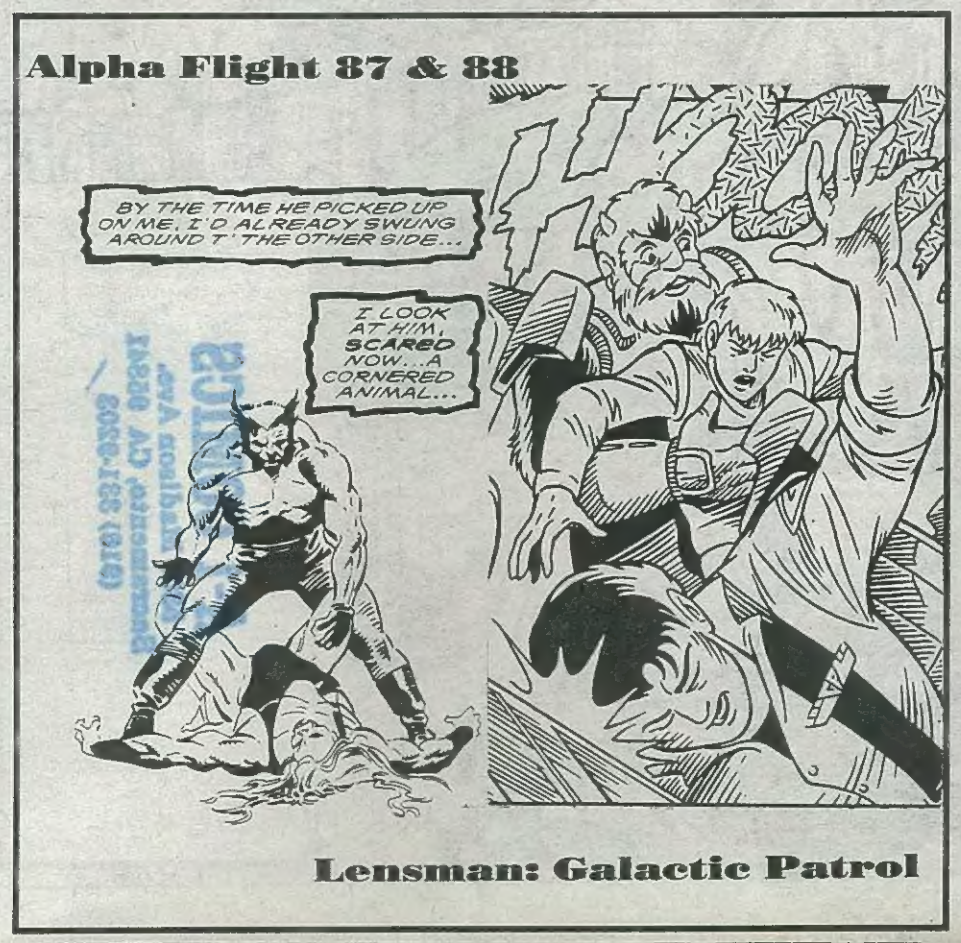
& REVIEWS

the like; I'm convinced that ecological-environmental storylines are going to be as overdone in the next few years as magic stories have been in the past few--and most of them aren't going to be worth the lives of the trees it took to communicate their trite tales. But ***The Hiding Place*** manage to touch on issues of ecology without preaching or becoming pedantic. That's part of the work's charm.

Fabian Nicieza seems determined to make ***Alpha Flight*** the most enjoyable of all the Marvel super-team books. Judging from what I've seen of his opening four-parter, Building Blocks, he's very successful. ***Alpha Flight*** #87 and #88, the first two installments of this series that redefines Alpha Flight for the 90's, are outstanding examples of what Alpha Flight could have been all along.


Alpha Flight 87 & 88
BY THE TIME HE PICKED UP ON ME, I'D ALREADY SWUNG AROUND T' THE OTHER SIDE...
I LOOK AT HIM. SCARED NOW...A CORNERED ANIMAL...
Lensman: Galactic Patrol

*This is probably the best that **Alpha Flight** has ever been. The early Byrne issues were good, but despite the fact that he created the book and characters, Byrne never fully realized the potential of the situation. Everything in Alpha Flight always seemed very disjointed and chaotic.*

Nicieza plays that chaos to its maximum potential. He takes the "separateness" of all the characters and brings that together to form a very solid story.

Wolverine plays a part in this story--and I want to stress that he *plays a part* in the story. He doesn't just appear to boost sales--his inclusion is vital to the events of Building Blocks, and had any other character been substituted, the story would not have worked. That's what a good crossover story should do--utilize the uniqueness of the character to make him a vital part of the plotline.

If you haven't been reading ***Alpha Flight*** for a while, don't worry; I've been doing little more than skimming the book for the past year or so, since it hasn't been the sort of book that interested me--but I had no trouble following Nicieza's plot...more than following it, I actually got so caught up in it that when I reached the end of the second part, I was disappointed that I couldn't go on to the third and fourth installments.

This ***Alpha Flight*** series is also the debut of Michael Bair as penciller of ***Alpha Flight.*** Bair's doing outstanding work here, the best of his career; his work has a sense of depth and detail that was missing in his earlier art. If this series is any indication, Bair has the potential to follow Erik Larsen, Rob Liefeld, and Jim Lee into the world of fan favorites.

I have to agree with you on Bair's art; this is by far the most consistent he's ever been.

*I have to go back to the story, though. This is such a strong plot and script that I will be surprised if this book doesn't become a fan favorite. I was also impressed with Nicieza's ability to write in different styles; as good as **New Warriors** was, it was nothing like this.*

Pick up ***Alpha Flight #87*** as soon as you see it on the stands; you may as well get it for cover price rather than paying big bucks for it a few months down the line when everyone's looking for a copy...

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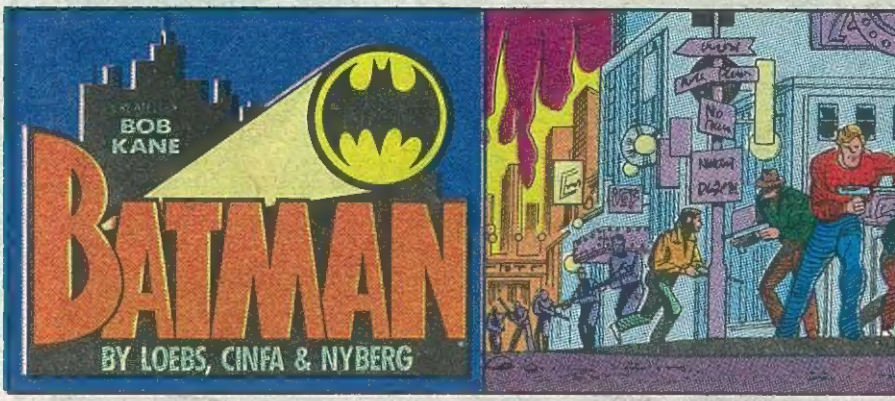
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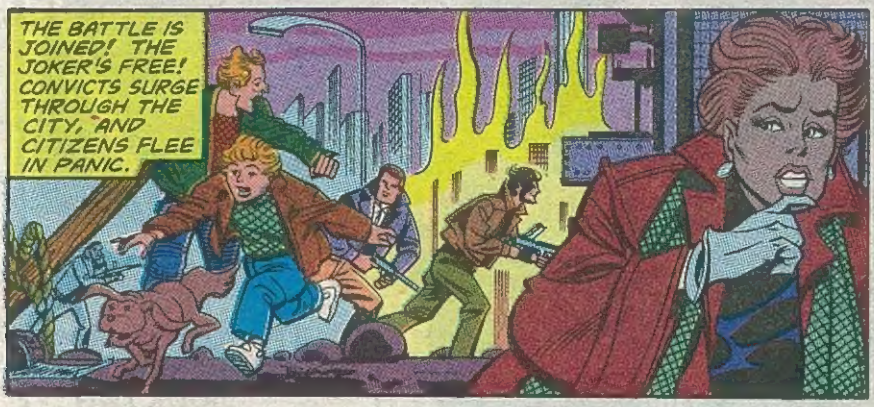
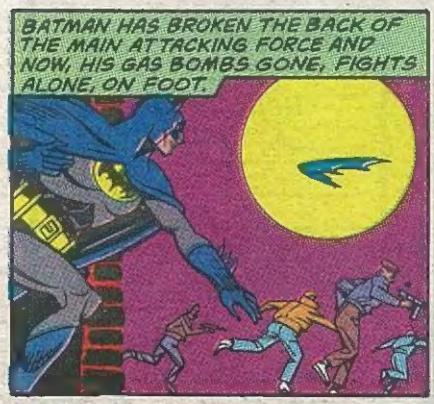
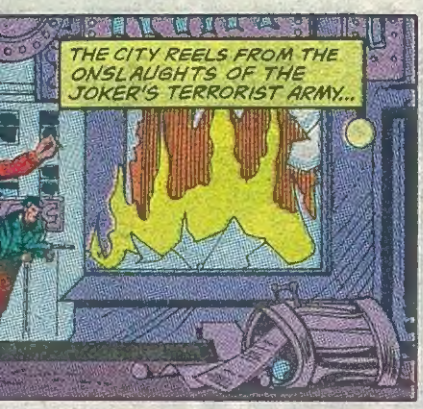
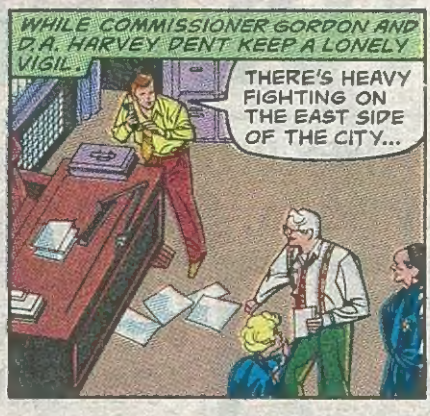

THE BATTLE IS JOINED! THE JOKER'S FREE! CONVICTS SURGE THROUGH THE CITY, AND CITIZENS FLEE IN PANIC.


BATMAN HAS BROKEN THE BACK OF THE MAIN ATTACKING FORCE AND NOW, HIS GAS BOMBS GONE, FIGHTS ALONE, ON FOOT.

MEANWHILE, OTHER MEN ARE CHANGING THEIR MINDS.
DUKE! YOU DIDN'T SHOOT THE BUS!
I KNOW. I HATE THIS. AN' I DON'T TRUST THE JOKER.





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